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AMS in Action

An Administrative Letter for Agricultural Marketing Service Employees/Winter Issue 1981

A first in federal government

USDA Begins Two-Year Vehicle Leasing Pilot Program

by John Nicholas

There could be a 1981 Ford Escort or General Motors Chevette in your near future, providing you are now driving 12,000 miles or more annually in conducting official government business.

It's all part of a plan in which five USDA agencies are taking part in a two-year pilot program involving the commercial lease of cars and trucks. And it is believed to be the first large-scale test of its kind in the federal government.

Jack Alexander, chief of the property and procurement branch in AMS's administrative services division, said, "The aim of the

commercial lease program is to save energy, increase cost efficiency, and provide our employees with current model, more serviceable transportation."

Alexander said the major thrust of the program is to substitute commercial leased miles for privately owned vehicle (POV) miles. This alone, he estimates, could yield significant saving in each instance where privately owned vehicles are now used 12,000 miles or more annually in official business.

Under the test program, Hertz Corp., a nationwide auto leasing service, began delivering the first

consignment of leased vehicles to USDA on Oct. 1. All vehicles will be new 1980 or 1981 models by Ford and General Motors. Hertz is under a one-year contract to lease between 573 and 1,000 cars and trucks during fiscal year 1981. The final count depends on determination of USDA's needs to be made by the agencies involved.

Agencies taking part are Agricultural Marketing Service, Federal Grain Inspection Service, Food Safety and Quality Service, Farmers Home Administration, and Federal Crop Insurance Corporation. These agencies are

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Division Director Burt Hawkins, left, and his administrative service division assistants, Jack Alexander, center, and John Bau, check out the new Ford Courier truck being leased under the vehicle test program. Other leased vehicles shown are, left, the Ford Fairmont, and, right, the GM Chevette. The Ford Courier usually will come equipped with cap tops for protecting tools and instruments.

currently paying for 99.7 million miles of POV use per year at a rate of 22-1/2 cents per mile.

"With the commercial lease vehicles averaging better than 25 miles to the gallon under Environmental Protection Agency estimated mileage standards as compared to only 16 miles for vehicles now being used, we expect to save 220,000 to 330,000 gallons a year," Alexander said. He noted that the total figure will depend on the final number of cars leased from Hertz this year.

Hertz is providing three categories of vehicles including two subcompacts, a compact, and a compact pickup truck. The subcompacts are Ford Escorts and GM Chevettes; the compact, a Ford Fairmont; and the truck, a Ford Courier. The truck comes equipped with a cap top for carrying tools and other equipment used in USDA field work.

Basic monthly cost to USDA per vehicle for the first 20,000 miles driven during a year, ranges from \$136.73 for the subcompacts to \$160.51 for the Courier truck. Beyond the 20,000 miles, Hertz will be paid an additional 5 cents per mile. "The lease concept," Alexander said, "is even more attractive when one considers that government travelers who use their POV's are now paid 22-1/2 cents per mile, and that rate is expected to escalate to 25 cents in the near future."

Another advantage of commercial leasing over the old system, Alexander said, is that all cars and trucks will be replaced annually with new models having the latest energy conservation equipment. The accepted federal standards for replacing agency or GSA-owned vehicles has been 60,000 miles, or six years, whichever comes first.

Alexander explained that the contract with Hertz covers short-term leasing, so has no effect on "short-term car rentals" for employees on temporary duty status or routine business trips. However, employees may arrange



The Chevette, a GM subcompact, gets a tryout by Alan Drumheller, another ASD property and procurement branch staffer. The Fairmont is the only compact included in this year's leasing plan.

Photos by Terry Walsh

in advance to use the Hertz lease vehicles in localities where an office is in a position to make them available.

"And we are looking at other exceptions to the mileage use requirement," Alexander said. "For example, in some offices we will assign a vehicle to several drivers who will alternate the use of the same vehicle so their combined mileage will meet our criteria."

Noting that the contract with Hertz is for one year with the option to renew, Alexander said, "We emphasized the need for bidders to have access to nationwide servicing facilities. And we encourage bidding by American-owned firms and small businesses. For the next contract, we expect more small and minority-owned businesses to look at and become involved in the program."

What happens after the two-year test period?

"We feel the commercial lease concept will catch on and will be a real plus for better government fleet operations," Alexander said. "Already, we are receiving queries from other USDA agencies and federal departments about it.

"Getting the program accepted and underway has been a real team effort," Alexander added. "My staff has received top support from many sources, especially Barbara Schlei, AMS administrator, Irving Thomas, AMS deputy administrator for management, Burt Hawkins, administrative services division director, and the top management of the other agencies taking part in the program."

(John Nicholas is editor of AMS IN ACTION.)



Beginning a road test of a Ford Fairmont is Eddie Claggett, another ASD property and procurement branch staffer. The Fairmont is the only compact included in this year's leasing plan.

Lamesa Cotton Growers Help Fund Instrument Classing

by Harold Bryson

Cotton growers around Lamesa, Texas, set many new records recently when they joined USDA in opening a new cotton marketing services office at 906 North Elgin.

They are the first group of farmers in the state to raise a half million dollars by self assessments to provide matching funds for a pilot study of cotton classing by electronic equipment.

They dedicated the first fully automated instrument cotton classing office in the nation in cooperation with the AMS cotton division.

They hosted the first secretary of agriculture to visit Lamesa when Bob Bergland officiated at the ribbon-cutting ceremonies of the new building erected to house the new AMS Lamesa cotton marketing services office.

They counted the largest number of news media representatives ever gathered in Lamesa to cover a major event.

"We've had a long and rewarding experience of working with USDA," said Donovan Phipps, president of the Lamesa Cotton Growers Association, who pointed out that the association has provided office space, furniture and equipment for the present Lamesa cotton classing facility for the past 22 years. AMS staffed and operated the facility which has been open only during the ginning season.

"Cotton production in this area has increased so much in recent years that we saw the need for a permanent, USDA-owned facility," Phipps said. Jesse Moore, director, AMS cotton division, agreed with this need and with the proposal to test the practical application of electronic classification of cotton in an area that



Bob Bergland, then Secretary of Agriculture, cuts the ceremonial ribbon, opening the USDA-AMS cotton marketing services office at Lamesa, Texas—the first fully automated classing office in the country. Looking on from Bergland's immediate left are Jesse Moore, director, AMS cotton division; and Donovan Phipps, president, Lamesa Cotton Growers Association. Others in background are officials with the association.

produces annually 500,000 to 800,000 bales.

The Lamesa Cotton Growers Association, working with the Texas Department of Agriculture, filed for an AMS matching funds grant under the Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program.

They received \$500,000 of federal funds to be matched by another 450,000 from the growers association.

The high volume instrument classification system is designed to replace the present, traditional system which utilizes human skills in determining grade and fiber length and a precision instrument to measure fiber fineness. The new system will measure color, length, fineness,

All these factors are important in the manufacturing process to produce the best yarn and fabric strength and length uniformity and to overcome processing difficulties, according to Moore.

"We have instrument-classed a small volume of cotton each year since 1973 in pilot projects located first in Raleigh, N.C., and recently in Lubbock, Texas," explained Moore, "but this small volume has not been sufficient to complete evaluation of the benefit of instrument classing."

The Lamesa cotton marketing services office expects to class about 450,000 bales this season by the new automated instrument equipment, said Don Lewallen, director of the Lamesa office.

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However, he pointed out that the new facility is large enough to handle 800,000 bales, which was the early estimate before the drought reduced the crop so drastically.

Last year the Lamesa cotton marketing services office classed 693,000 bales of cotton and employed 60 people during the peak of season, Lewallen said.

The office serves 71 gins in nine counties, including: Andrews, Borden, Dawson, Gaines, Howard, Lynn, Martin and Yoakum counties in Texas and Lea county in New Mexico.



Watching the first fully automated cotton classing instrument to be tested in the nation are from left, Donovan Phipps; Bob Bergland; Bob Hale, vice president of the association; and in the foreground, John Fox, assistant area director of the Lamesa office.



News media from all over the Southwest flocked to Lamesa to report the opening of the new cotton classification facilities.



John Fox, assistant area director, AMS cotton marketing services, demonstrates to Bob Bergland how cotton is classed by a fully automated machine while newsmen from regional television stations film the event.

(Harold Bryson is Southwest regional director of AMS information in Dallas, Texas.)

Photos by Joe J. Bryant, Texas Agricultural Extension Service.

Administrator Praises AMS Teamwork

The dedication of the Lamesa, Texas, all-instrument cotton classing office and implementation of electronic recording of cotton classing--two high priorities for the cotton division this year--are prime examples of teamwork within AMS, Administrator Barbara Lindemann Schlei, said recently.

Speaking at a bi-monthly staff meeting of the cotton division, Schlei said these goals could not have been reached through the efforts of the cotton division alone. "Technical services, administrative services, and market research and development divisions all provided valuable assistance without which the projects could not have been successfully achieved this year. This kind of team effort within AMS and among all its divisions and branches is essential to our success. I am very pleased at the joint cooperative effort and the manner in which it was implemented."

Hazel Reich—“Woman of Achievement”

by Mary Galloway

“It is not just what she did, but that she does such an excellent job of whatever endeavor she takes on.”

That statement is a pretty nice tribute in itself. But it doesn’t stop there.

Hazel Reich, an AMS poultry market news reporter in Chicago, was recently awarded the title of “Woman of Achievement” by a local chapter of a national women’s club.

“Hazel came to our club about three years ago,” a spokeswoman for the Dixie Oaks (Ill.) Chapter of the National Federation of Business and Professional Women’s Clubs, Inc., continued. “And since that time she has held four chairmanship positions and she did an excellent job in all of them—just excellent. That plus her employment and raising a family—which suddenly she had to do alone—all went into consideration when we



awarded her the title for the 1980-81 year. And now she’s our treasurer.”

Hazel said the club is basically “women helping women.” There are about 50 women in this particular chapter, which encompasses several suburban communities. They expend their efforts helping one another improve themselves by sharing expertise, providing scholarships and other education-

al opportunities, and by encouraging better communication between working women. The organization additionally strives to stimulate the involvement of women in their communities.

To supplement dues and carry out some of the programs, the club sponsors several events during the year to raise funds. The many chores to carry off any one of these events takes a lot of time and work.

Where she found time is anybody’s guess, but Hazel recently chaired committees for two projects—a fashion show and a membership drive. She worked on a theater party committee and has served two years on a nominating committee. During the annual “Make it-Bake it-Grow it-Show it” event, another of Hazel’s talents was discovered.

“Hazel’s quite a cook! We’ve had some pretty good tasting food as a result of her efforts in that event,” the spokeswoman said.

(*Mary Galloway is an information specialist in the Chicago regional information office.*)

Personnel Actions

Technical Services Division

PROMOTIONS:

M. Patricia Grinnitz, management analyst.

Marilyn Monk, computer specialist.

Leon Smith, computer specialist.

SUMMER CASH AWARDS:

Bryon Veazey.
Cindy Fuller.
Khue Ngugen.

TRANSFER:

Clyde Goodman, computer specialist, to Department of Commerce.

Administrative Services Division

WELCOMES:

George Nettles.
Ronald Lewis.
Gregory Gaddis.

RESIGNATION:

Roy Johnson.

Personnel Division

Welcomes:

John Feducia, Jr., chief, AMS employment and classification branch.

B. Jean Goodwin, section head, AMS employment and classification branch.

Rosalee Williams, personnel staffing and classification specialist.

Earlean Jones, high school co-op AMS employment and classification branch.

George Sakacs, high school co-op, AMS employment and classification branch.

Amy Bewick, high school co-op, employee relations and services branch.

Roslyne Pratt, high school co-op, labor relations, evaluation, and training branch.

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TRANSFER:

Jane Hahn, FGIS employment and classification branch, to Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

REASSIGNMENTS:

Terri Hubbell, FGIS employment and classification branch, to ESS.

Robbie Rowe, employee relations and services branch, to labor relations, evaluation, and training branch.

AWARD:

Emma Bennett, FGIS employment and classification branch, QSI and Merit Award for continuing excellence in providing a broad range of personnel management support services to FGIS.

Cotton Division

APPOINTMENT:

Phyllis Minnick, clerk typist, marketing services branch, Corpus Christi, Texas.

Packers and Stockyards

WELCOME:

Charlene Seelinger, clerk typist, part time, North Brunswick, N.J.

TRANSFER:

Joyce Edwards, clerk typist, Portland, Ore., to Portland District, Corps of Engineers, Portland.

AWARD:

William V. Carroll, Certificate of Merit for outstanding leadership and professional excellence, ingenuity, skill and creative service in implementing the meat merchandising provisions of the P&S Act.

Tobacco Division

WELCOMES:

Faye O. Johnson, clerk, Washington, D.C.

Dianne T. Bryant, clerk, Washington, D.C.

PROMOTIONS:

Coolidge G. Dowdy, agricultural commodity grader, Raleigh, N.C. region.

Walter E. McCall, agricultural commodity grader, Raleigh, N.C. region.

John L. Taylor, agricultural commodity grader, Raleigh, N.C. region.

TERMINATIONS- RESIGNATIONS:

Jeffrey L. Melago, Lexington, Ky. region.

Hugh E. Whitted, Raleigh, N.C. region.

Donna A. Collins, Washington, D.C.

Brigitte B. Walker, Raleigh, N.C. region.

Donny Rich, Lexington, Ky. region.

RETIREMENT:

Bennie E. Newton, Raleigh, N.C. region.

AMS in ACTION

Barbara L. Schlei
AMS Administrator

John Nicholas
Editor

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AWARDS:

Special Achievement:

James B. Parrish, supervisory agricultural commodity grader, Raleigh, N.C. region, for outstanding performance as set supervisor and for his dependability, leadership, progressiveness, fairness to all employees and peers, knowledge, application of U.S. Standard grades, and administration of regulations.

Charles E. French, supervisory market reporter, Lexington, Ky. region, for continuing excellence in contributing greatly to the increased effectiveness of the tobacco market new programs.

Lawrence C. Newman, supervisory agricultural commodity grader, Lexington, Ky. region, for exceptional performance of special assignments, versatility, technical skill, and outstanding leadership qualities.

Gorrell C. Prim, supervisory agricultural commodity grader, for outstanding work as inspector in one of the largest redryers in the flue-cured belt, for reinspecting a large volume of loan tobacco and for his dedication, dependability, leadership, knowledge, and application of U.S. Standard Grades.

Ollie A. Coles, administrative technician, for continuing excellence in the performance of administrative duties contributing greatly to the increased effectiveness of the tobacco division programs.

Frankie G. Rish, clerk typist, Raleigh, N.C. region, for exceptional performance of the tobacco division's market news programs.

Brenda M. Webb, Patricia Harril, Opal D. Agee, Dixie W. Depue, Virginia Courtney, and Regena M. Thomas received a group award for outstanding performance of special assignments, continuing excellence in performance of market news clerical duties contributing greatly to the increased effectiveness of the tobacco division's market news program in the burley region.

